

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method of obtaining information related to a specific product
2 from multiple remote databases accessible over the Internet via a communications server
3 using a personal communication device (PCD), said PCD having a display and means for
4 communicating with the communication server, the method comprising the steps of:

5 a) entering product information into said PCD;

6 b) transmitting the product information to the communication server from
7 the PCD;

8 c) transmitting a search query to the communication server from the PCD,
9 wherein the search query includes a request to obtain information related to the specific
10 product;

11 d) processing the search query to obtain the product related information
12 from one or more of the multiple remote databases;

13 e) responding to the search query by sending the product related
14 information from the communication server to the PCD; and

15 f) displaying at least a portion of the product related information on the
16 PCD.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the PCD is a cellular phone.

1 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the PCD includes an OCR reader
2 for reading product information, and wherein the step of entering product information
3 includes reading the product information using the OCR reader.

1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the PCD includes a scanning
2 mechanism for scanning a product code on the specific product, and wherein the step of
3 entering product information includes scanning the product code with the scanning
4 mechanism.

1 5. The method of claim 4, wherein the product code is a bar code.

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1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the PCD includes a keypad, and
2 wherein the step of entering product information includes manually entering the product
3 information using the keypad.

1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein steps b) and c) are performed at
2 substantially the same time.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the product information includes a
2 product code, wherein the communication server is communicably coupled to one or
3 more product code libraries, each of said libraries storing product codes in relation to
4 product identifiers, and wherein the method further includes the step of the
5 communication server obtaining a product identifier for the specific product from one of
6 the libraries.

1 9. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of processing the search
2 query includes the steps of sending the search query to a search engine, conducting a
3 search by the search engine, and returning the results of the search from the search engine
4 to the communication server.

1 10. The method of claim 9, wherein the search engine is resident on
2 one of the communication server and a second server communicably coupled to the
3 communication server over the Internet.

1 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the displayed product related
2 information includes one of competitive pricing information for multiple merchants, a
3 product review of the specific product and locations of merchants that sell the specific
4 product.

1 12. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of the user
2 formulating a second query in response to the displayed product related information.

1 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the second query includes a
2 request to purchase the specific product from a specific merchant.

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14. A method of obtaining competitive pricing information for a specific product from multiple remote databases associated with different merchants, said databases being accessible over the Internet via a communications server using a personal communication device (PCD), said PCD having a display, a scanning mechanism for scanning product codes, and means for communicating with the communication server, the method comprising the steps of:

a) scanning a product code into said PCD, wherein the product code is located on said specific product;

b) transmitting the product code to the communication server from the PCD;

c) transmitting a search query to the communication server from the PCD, wherein the search query includes a request to obtain competitive pricing information for the specific product;

d) processing the search query to obtain the competitive pricing information from two or more of the multiple remote databases;

e) responding to the search query by sending the competitive pricing information from the communication server to the PCD; and

f) displaying at least a portion of the competitive pricing information on the PCD.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of the user formulating a second query in response to the displayed competitive pricing information wherein the second query includes a request to purchase the specific product from a specific merchant.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein the communication server is communicably coupled to one or more product code libraries, each of said libraries storing product codes in relation to product identifiers, wherein the method further includes the step of the communication server obtaining a product identifier for the specific product from one of the libraries.

17. The method of claim 14, wherein the PCD is a cellular phone.

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18. An communication system for obtaining information related to a specific product from multiple databases accessible over the Internet, the system comprising:

a remote communication server communicably coupled over the Internet with the multiple databases; and

a hand-held personal communication device (PCD), including:

an input mechanism for entering product information;

a keypad for manually entering alphanumeric information;

a display for displaying a user interface;

communication means for communicating with the remote

communication server;

wherein when a user desires to obtain information related to a specific product, the user enters product information associated with the specific product using the input mechanism of the PCD and enters a search query requesting information related to the specific product, wherein the PCD communicates the product information and the query to the remote communication server via the communication means, wherein the remote server processes the query, searches the multiple databases to obtain the requested information and returns the requested information to the PCD.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein the input mechanism includes one of an OCR reader and a bar code scanner.

20. The system of claim 18, wherein the product information includes a product code, further comprising one or more product code libraries communicably coupled to the communication server, wherein when the communication server receives the product code from the PCD, the server sends the product code to one of the libraries, wherein the library returns a product identifier associated with the product code, and wherein the communication server processes the query using the product identifier.

21. The system of claim 18, wherein the requested information includes one of competitive pricing information for the specific product from multiple merchants, product review information for the specific product and locations of merchants that sell the specific product.

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1 22. The system of claim 18, wherein the PCD is a cellular phone, and
2 wherein the communication means includes a cellular transceiver.

1 23. A method of obtaining information related to a specific product
2 from multiple remote databases accessible over the Internet via a communications server
3 using a cellular phone having a display and means for communicating with the
4 communication server, the method comprising the steps of:

5 a) entering product information into the cellular phone using one of a bar
6 code scanner and an OCR reader integrated in the cellular phone;

7 b) transmitting the product information to the communication server from
8 the cellular phone;

9 c) transmitting a search query to the communication server from the
10 cellular phone, wherein the search query includes a request to obtain information related
11 to the specific product;

12 d) processing the search query to obtain the product related information
13 from one or more of the multiple remote databases;

14 e) responding to the search query by sending the product related
15 information from the communication server to the cellular phone; and

16 f) displaying at least a portion of the product related information on the
17 cellular phone display.

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